

**Glenda Wiles**

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**From:** RRRnch@aol.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 17, 2008 11:30 AM  
**To:** Glenda Wiles  
**Subject:** Stevi River Road

**APR 17 2008**  
**Ravalli County Commissioners**

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Dear Commissioners:

We are writing to address a current and potentially even greater problem on Stevi River Road. As you know, the State Highway Department has already begun their widening/improvement project for Highway 93 north and south of the Stevi Y Cutoff Road and the area in between. As this project progresses, those of us who live on Stevi River Road have experienced increased traffic, and we anticipate further increases by those trying to bypass the highway construction zone as the project progresses.

Stevi River Road was not designed as a thoroughfare; it is a country road meant for local residents. Knowing this, we residents are greatly concerned that this increased traffic poses safety and environmental hazards for our residents and their children. Those of us who live on Stevi River Road are familiar with where our children live and play. We take special precautions to maintain their safety. We are also very considerate of all the walkers, bikers, and horseback riders who recreate on our road. However, drivers seeking a bypass around the construction and unfamiliar with our road dynamics, typically speed in their quest to get to their destination as quickly as possible. This creates dangerous situations for the locals and interlopers.

Further, from an environmental aspect, the increase in road traffic creates both air quality and water quality issues. Drivers navigating River Road even at slow speeds stir up dust; speeders create dust whorls the size of small tornados! This dust ultimately ends up not only on our coffee table and in our lungs, but also in the Bitterroot River causing silting and sediment buildup. Current conditions have caused damage to fish and other water habitat and overall degradation to water quality. Increased traffic will only exacerbate the problem.

Lastly, our dirt/gravel roadbed does not hold up to local traffic, let alone increases in traffic. Every year Stevi River Road deteriorates into a rutty, pot holey, wash boardy, dust bowl adventure. We residents know to slow to a creep, but drivers by-passing Highway 93 road construction will not know how to safely navigate the road -- at least the first time.

Over the years, we have felt the traffic density of River Road justified paving, but after many inquiries to the road department, we have been variously told: 1) there is a grandfathered easement that precludes paving because the road is not wide enough; 2) there is no traffic count; 3) the residents don't want it paved; and, 4) it costs too much. Actually, there is a number 5, the local joke, that we've never had a county commissioner live on our road.... 🚗

All jokes aside, can you please advise what actions the county plans to take on the above-mentioned issues? We look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

Jan and Arnie Polanchek

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